

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Grassroots Rally in Bowie, Maryland
November 7, 2022

The President. Hello, Maryland! My name—[*applause*]. My name is Joe Biden, and I'm Jill Biden's husband.

It is great to be at Bowie State, one of our Nation's great HBCU's. I was at my home HBCU, Delaware State, talking to students about our plan to relieve student debt. And by the way, you've got to forgive me, but I got my start at Delaware State. [*Laughter*] I don't want to hear it now. I like you all, but you know—all kidding aside, you know, my family is—my dad's looking down and smiling, because he's from Baltimore. [*Laughter*] And I kid your Congressman that your Eastern Shore is Delaware's western shore. [*Laughter*]

Look, talking about my historic commitment to HBCUs, that includes the \$5.8 billion I put in the budget for HBCUs. You know why? HBCUs don't have the endowments others have, but guess what? You're just as smart. You're just as bright. You're just as good as any college in America. And that money—that money is to build laboratories and other things for the future that you need to have access to. But look, folks, you know, let me tell you: One of the great ways to honor HBCUs is to vote—[*laughter*—is to vote.

Here in Maryland, you've got some great people to vote for. Chris Van Hollen is up for reelection this year, and he's a great Senator, a hell of a guy, and makes a great team with Ben Cardin. And they both are strong, principled, and effective. And they've got a great congressional delegation, Steny Hoyer and so many others. Look, keep them. You need them. I need them.

And of course, you've got that next Governor. What's his name? Wes—Wes—Wes Moore! That guy is the real deal, man. As you just heard from Jill, he's a combat veteran and a Rhodes Scholar. I've always worried about Rhodes Scholars, though, you know? [*Laughter*] They're so damn smart, I wonder about it, you know? [*Laughter*]

But all kidding aside, Rhodes Scholar, antipoverty leader. Wes is a leader who will build a Maryland that leaves no one behind, and I believe that. He will be a great and historic Governor of Maryland. They'll remember him.

Folks, you've got one day until one of the most important elections. You heard this time and again. I almost feel guilty repeating it. Our lifetimes are going to be shaped by what happens the next year to 3 years. It's going to shape what the next couple of decades look like, for real.

And back in August, I came to Rockville to kick off the campaign season with Wes. And we're here at Bowie to close it out with Wes and all of you. And let's be clear: This election is not a referendum, it's a choice. It's a choice between two very different visions of America.

I said from the beginning, my objective—my objective—when I ran was to build an economy from the bottom up and the middle out, not—it's a fundamental shift, and it's working, from the MAGA Republican proposals, the trickle-down economics.

You know, you saw what happened last time under my predecessor.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He was the first President since Hoover—since Herbert Hoover——

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

[*Laughter*] I tell you what, let him sing. Let the man sing. Look——

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. That's—hey, look—look, I—look, he was the first President since Herbert Hoover to lose jobs over the course of his Presidency. Unemployment was at 6.4 percent. We lost manufacturing jobs. Nationwide, hundreds of thousands of small businesses closed. And the country in a pandemic with no plan out. Only 3.5 million people were vaccinated the day I got elected. Now we have fully vaccinated 220 million people. So we moved, and our approach is working.

Since I came to office, we've created 10 million new jobs; 3.75-percent unemployment. And, folks, Black unemployment has dropped from 9.2 to 5.9 and going down.

And we're making things here in America again. We're shipping American-made products overseas, instead of shipping American jobs overseas. We created 700,000 manufacturing jobs, and we'll create thousands more with the CHIPS and Science Act. Companies are investing billions of dollars, creating thousands of good-paying jobs.

Look, but for all the progress, we know a lot of families are still struggling. That's why, with the help of your Members of Congress, I signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act. Here's what it's going to do. It's going to reduce the cost of everything that folks in Maryland have to pay for every month, from—giving Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prescription pricing. The VA has that power, and it's cut drug prices in half. We're going to do the same with Medicare.

Big Pharma always, always, always stopped it. But not this year. This year, Big Pharma lost, and the American people won. Those of you who have moms and dads or grandparents, they're paying a lot of money for their prescriptions, even if they're on Medicare. Well, we set a \$2,000-a-year cap. It can never charge more than that total for the year, even if their drugs cost \$8-, \$10-, \$12-, \$15,000, like a lot of cancer drugs do.

And by the way, how many of you know somebody who has diabetes and needs insulin? Well, guess what? They're paying \$400 to \$600 a month, but we're limiting the price to \$35. Thirty-five dollars. Period.

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. And we passed it.

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. Hey——

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

[*The President addressed a protester in the balcony.*]

The President. Hey—hey, man, don't jump. You look crazy enough to jump. Don't jump. Don't jump.

Look—and we're coming—and we're coming to make sure that \$35 a month is for everybody. By the way, it starts in January.

Look, folks, we've got to make things affordable for people. We've got to make sure we're making big investments——

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. ——ever to deal with the climate crisis.

You know, the MAGA Republicans and that guy up on the balcony there, threatening to jump, they don't——

[The disruption in the audience continued.]

They don't understand we have a climate crisis. Look, we're going to save—as experts say, we'll save an average of \$500 in energy costs for people.

And we're going to do this all while reducing the Federal—you know these Republicans talk about "big-spendin' Democrats"? Guess what? I cut the Federal budget by 1 trillion, 400 billion dollars in 1 year—1 year. It never happened before. And last year, we cut it by \$350 billion.

Look, we did it all without raising taxes on a single person making less than 400 grand. And I don't want you to hear from Republicans who blew up the deficit. Remember, these are the guys who passed the \$2 trillion tax cut benefiting the wealthy and big corporations and didn't pay for a penny of it. And look, we're the ones bringing down the deficit, allowing us to afford to provide ordinary hard-working Americans a little break.

And we're finally making sure the biggest corporations begin to pay their fair share. I just signed a law saying that they've got to pay a minimum of 15 percent. A lot of nurses, doctors, they pay a lot less—more than 15 percent.

But here, those days are over, where corporations are paying zero in taxes. You know, in 2020, 55 Fortune 500 companies paid 40—made \$40 billion—\$40 billion—and they didn't pay a single penny. Not a single penny.

Well, look, because we reduced the deficit so much, we're in a position to help families—working families, middle class families caught in the global crossfire of a pandemic and Putin's aggressive war in Ukraine.

We're here at one of the great HBCUs in America. And because I acted, I'm able to reduce your debt by \$20,000—[*applause*]*—10 for debt relief and another 10 if you had a Pell grant. And 90 percent of all the folks who get this relief earn less than 75 grand a year. And, folks—so you can have—make a downpayment on a home, you'll be able to start a business, just give you some breathing room.*

And what are the MAGA Republicans and Wes's opponent talking about student debt? They're trying to stop it. The hypocrisy is unbelievable. MAGA Republicans who took hundreds of thousands of dollars, even millions of dollars, in pandemic relief loans, had their loans forgiven, are trying to block this relief.

Marjorie Taylor Greene, that great American——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——she and her husband received \$183,000 in debt relief, cash to pay for their business. And then there's another. She said it's completely unfair to forgive student loans for working and middle class families. Come on, man.

Another Republican—another Republican, Vern Buchanan of Florida, said this—my plan was reckless, yet he was forgiven \$2 million in a loan.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Two million. Federal money. Who the hell do they think they are?

And, folks, that's some of the big stuff we've done. Now let's look at the Republicans. Do you know what their number-one priority is if they take control of the House? They're saying it out loud.

They want to get rid of everything we just did. The power we just gave Medicare to negotiate lower prices—gone. The \$2,000 cap on prescription drugs—gone. The \$35-a-month cap on insulin—gone. Tax credits for lower energy costs—gone.

Audience members. Gone!

The President. Fifteen-percent corporate tax—minimum tax—gone.

Audience members. Gone!

The President. The \$800 savings for health premiums we got for the Affordable Care Act—gone.

Audience members. Gone!

The President. Look, folks, it get worse—gets worse from there. And here's what else they're doing: They're coming after your parents and, ultimately, your Social Security and Medicare. Who do you think I—you probably think I'm kidding. But don't listen to me, listen to them. Listen to what they had to say.

This guy—I'm reading from a plan by the Senator from Florida, Rick Scott, who is in charge of electing Republican Senators.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. This is their plan, okay? It says: "All Federal legislation sunsets in 5 years. If a law is worth keeping, Congress can pass it again."

And along came a guy named Ron Johnson from Wisconsin. He says 4 years—5 years is too long to wait. Every single year should be on the chopping block. What do you think is going to happen?

You've been paying for Social Security since you've been 16 years old in your paycheck. Folks, if Congress doesn't keep—vote to keep it, it goes away. And it's not just Social Security and Medicare. They want to put veterans benefits, everything on the line.

But look—look—but if Democrats keep control of Congress, we're going to make sure veterans are always cared for. And you damn well know Army Captain Wes Moore will always have the back of our veterans.

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. One more thing about veterans. I signed a thing called the PACT Act, the most significant law in our Nation's history. It helps millions of veterans exposed to toxic substances, like the firefighters were on 9/11, only these were those veterans in Iraq and Afghanistan exposed to burn pits the size of football fields, 8 to 10 feet deep, full of wastewater, tires, poisonous chemicals, jet fuel, and so much more.

I was in and out of Iraq 30-some times and Afghanistan. And my son was there. My son was a captain—a major in the United States Army, won the Bronze Star.

[*The President addressed an audience member.*]

I see you're waving. Hi.

Won the Bronze Star and a Conspicuous Service Medal. But his hooch was less than a couple hundred yards from those burn pits. He went in great shape and came home with stage 4 glioblastoma and died.

The law guarantees health care to expose—those exposed to the burn pits and tuition benefits for their families in their assistance. That's the least we can do. But these guys don't like it.

But, folks, there's more. Republicans in Congress, led by South Carolina Lindsey Graham, already introduced legislation to ban—to ban—the right to choose. States are already passing bans without exception for rape or incest or even the life of the mother. Wes's opponent has introduced 14 bills to limit the right to choose. Fourteen times.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. If you elect Wes your Governor, he's going to make sure the right to choose is protected for every woman in Maryland. If Republicans gain control of Congress and pass a nationwide ban on abortion, I will veto it. And, folks, if we elect Chris Van Hollen and elect two more Democrats and keep control of the House, we're going to codify *Roe v. Wade* in January and make it the rule of the land.

And I love how these Republicans talk about fighting crime. On a Federal level, we passed the most significant gun safety legislation in nearly 30 years, and we're coming back to do what I was able to do in the nineties. That is ban assault weapons.

Wes Moore is a combat veteran. He knows it's responsible—what responsible gun ownership is. He'll ban ghost guns, invest in community-based violence prevention programs. Maryland's largest police union and Fraternal Order of Police has endorsed Wes Moore because he actually has a plan to keep Maryland families safe.

Wes's opponent won't stand up to his own party. He won't stand up to the NRA. And he is the guy—this is the guy raffling off an AR-15 at a campaign event? Give me a break, for God's sake. He's concerned about public safety?

Look, folks, as I spoke about it last week: Democracy is on the ballot. Political violence and intimidation are on the rise all across America. And you remember January 6, the angry mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol, attacked law enforcement, hunted down elected officials, erected gallows to hang Vice President Pence. Well, Wes supported—Wes's opponent supported that mob. He organized buses and paid for them to go to the Capitol because he thought the election was stolen. He tweeted that Mike Pence was a traitor. Think about that.

For Wes Moore, patriotism meant leaving his family and putting on a country's uniform and leading his fellow soldiers in combat. His opponent: Patriotism means putting on a baseball cap, inviting people to attack the Capitol. You can't be pro-American and pro-insurrection. It's real simple.

And, folks, there are more than 300 election deniers running on the Republican ticket this year, and Wes's opponent is one of them. These elections deniers are not only trying to deny you your right to vote, they're trying to deny your right to have your vote counted. With this election, these deniers—there's only two outcomes, in their view, of an election. One, either they win or they were cheated. One of the two. That's their view. But let me tell you something: You can't only love your country when you win.

Wes knows what patriotism means. His opponent—Wes described his opponent as far outside the mainstream and—be dangerous in the Governor's office. Well, even the current Republican Governor agrees with Wes. Look up what Larry Hogan has said about Wes's opponent.

Folks, this is serious stuff. Let me close with this. Today, we face an inflection point, one of those moments that comes around every three or four generations. We know in our bones that our

democracy is at risk, and we know that this is your moment to defend it, preserve or protect it, choose it.

And I want you to know we'll meet this moment. Remember, the power in America lies where it always does: in your hands, the hands of the people, and especially with young people in this Nation, like all of you here. I mean it. I'm optimistic because I believe your generation represents the best educated, most talented, least prejudiced generation in American history.

And in 2021—2020, many of you voted for the first time. Voted for the first time. And guess what? Look at what you did when you exercised your power to vote. You elected Kamala Harris, the first woman Vice President. And your vote allowed me to put the first Black woman in history on the United States Supreme Court.

And your—with your vote, I'm keeping the promise that—my promise: No one should be in jail for the mere possession of marijuana. And their record should be expunged.

Remember, the power is in your hands. You're one of the reasons why I've never been more optimistic about America's future.

Look, America is reasserting ourselves, leading the world in the 21st century. As I travel this country and the world, I see a great nation, because I know we're a good people. We just have to remember who in the hell we are. We are the United States of America. And there's nothing—nothing, nothing, nothing—beyond our capacity if we do it together.

So vote! Get out the vote! God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:26 p.m. in the Leonidas S. James Physical Education Complex at Bowie State University. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Anthony G. Brown; former President Donald J. Trump; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; State Delegate Daniel L. Cox of Maryland, in his capacity as the Republican gubernatorial candidate; Perry Greene, husband of Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene; Rep. Vernon G. Buchanan; Sen. Ronald H. Johnson; and Supreme Court Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 8.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee, grassroots rally in Bowie, MD.

Locations: Bowie, MD.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Brown, Anthony G.; Buchanan, Vernon G.; Cardin, Benjamin L.; Cox, Daniel L.; Graham, Lindsey O.; Green, Marjorie Taylor; Greene, Perry ; Harris, Kamala D.; Hogan, Lawrence J., Jr.; Hoyer, Steny H.; Jackson, Ketanji Brown; Johnson, Ronald H.; Moore, Westley W.O. "Wes"; Pence, Michael R.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Scott, Richard L.; Trump, Donald J.; Van Hollen, Christopher, Jr.

Subjects: ; Armed Forces, U.S : Servicemembers :: Environmental exposures in war zones; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Advanced manufacturing, promotion efforts; Congress : House of Representatives :: Majority leader; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; District of Columbia : 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; Economy, national : Improvement; Education : Postsecondary education :: Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Elections : 2022 congressional elections; Elections : Voter participation; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Environment : Climate change; Health and medical care : Abortion; Health

and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; Law enforcement and crime : Fraternal Order of Police; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Law enforcement and crime : Marijuana, decriminalization efforts; Maryland : 2022 gubernatorial election; Maryland : Democratic Party events; Maryland : Governor; Maryland : President's visits; Rifle Association, National; Social Security and retirement : Social Security program; Taxation : Corporate tax rates; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Veterans : Benefits; Veterans : Health and medical care; White House Office : Vice President.

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